DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 093 070 EA 006 267

TITLE [The Learning Society: Education as an Agent of Change. Proceedings of a Residential Seminar.] (2nd, Bunbury, Western Australia, March 23-24, 1974.)

INSTITUTION Australian Coll. of Education, South Bentley. Western Australia Chapter.

PUB DATE Mar 74

NOTE 31p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE

DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Change Strategies; Continuous Learning; *Educational Change; Educational Innovation; *Educational Problems; Governance; Humanization; Individual Needs; *Open Education; Relevance (Education); Secondary Schools; Social Change; *Social Problems

IDENTIFIERS *Australia; Karmel Report; Learning Society

ABSTRACT

This seminar was concerned with a critical examination of the total situation at all levels of education and with an exposition of the "ideal" role of education as an agent of change to achieve a desirable situation. The first of two papers examines some issues and suggested solutions within the learning society. The problem facing Australian society is defined as one of determining the extent to which a more open and relevant education system can provide a solution to the needs of a continuing education. The second paper investigates education as an active agent of change in a changing society, making a detailed analysis of the implications of the Karmel Report (1973) and the consequent educational changes. (Author/WM)

ED 093070

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THE AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Western Australian Chapter

[THE LEARNING SOCIETY: EDUCATION AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE.
Proceedings of a Residential Seminar.]

PAPERS PRESENTED
AT A
STATE CONFERENCE
CONDUCTED AT BUNBURY

22nd – 24th March 1974

EA 006 267

Foreword

by

Dr A.N. Stewart

This publication presents the proceedings of a residential seminar conducted in Bunbury, Western Australia, on the 23rd and 24th March, 1974, by the Western Australian Chapter of the Australian College of Education. The seminar was the second of this type held by the Chapter and had as its theme The Learning Society: Education as an Agent of Change. Its discussions were concerned with a critical examination of the total situation at all levels of education and with an exposition of the 'ideal' role of education as an agent of change to achieve a desirable situation.

In the first of the papers, Professor J. Peach, Professor of Education at the University of Manitoba, examines some issues and suggested solutions within the learning society. He defines the problem facing Australian society as one of continuing to search for the 'unique balance which provides our society with a dynamic, responsible educational system.' Essentially, Peach asks to what extent a more open and relevant system can provide a solution to the needs of a continuing education.

Professor P.W. Musgrave investigates education as an active agent in changing society. In particular he makes a detailed analysis of the implications of the Karmel Report (1973) and the consequent educational changes. He sees the present programme of the Report as being marked by somewhat uncertain divine intention and as being somewhat weak in theology and considers that it will probably raise aspiration more than achievement.

Education has been criticized for 'exhorting others to change their ways' while being resistant to innovation in its own affairs. There is a need today for educationists to accept a challenge to extend and adapt education to meet individual and social requirements at a time when there is a growing public interest in education and external pressures on education are intensifying. The proceedings of this seminar make a contribution towards meeting this need.

The Chapter is grateful to those whose efforts contributed towards the success of this seminar. In particular it recognizes the contribution of Mr E.H. Jones whose organization contributed to much of the success of this second residential venture.

THE LEARNING SOCIETY :

SOME ISSUES AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

J.W. Peach, Honorary Fellow

The Australian National University

Paper presented at the State Conference,

The Australian College of Education
Western Australia Chapter

Bunbury, Western Australia

March 23rd, 1974

For some time educational institutions in Western society have been faced with increasing attacks about their lack of responsiveness to modern needs. Schools and universities have been seen to varying degrees, as dehumanized, as elitist, as upholders of the status quo, and as providing insufficient preparation to citizens of the society of the future. In some countries, notably North America, France and Germany, the attacks have been widespread and sustained. In a few cases attacks have led to disruption of institutions, physical violence and, in isolated incidents, death. While some members of society have turned to violence as a means of expressing their concern and frustration, others have become alienated and have simply "turned off" the institution. Many of them, particularly in secondary schools, remain in the institution as non-productive members. Lack of overt action may present a false or distorted image so we assume conditions are satisfactory. Whether or not the suspicion that the apathetic vastly outnumber the violent member is true, our concern for the inactive ones must not be less, simply because they cause far less trouble. It is vital that the concerns of both extremes be considered and, if humanly possible, resolved.

To some people intimately involved in education, change and talk of change has become part of daily living. The degree to which the ponderous machinery has fundamentally changed may not be as great as many teachers and parents believe. The mustering of consensus for radical changes takes a considerable time period in the initial stages. At this particular point in history, the climate of agreement about development and emphases appears to be particularly strong. If we are on the verge of an educational renaissance, it should be appropriate to consider some of the forces underlying the demands for change and to explore some suggested methods for accommodating these demands. I propose, therefore, to sketch briefly the pertinent social, economical and political trends, to analyze how these are manifested in education, and then look at three recent Canadian documents to see what proposals are made to achieve the learning society.

I. BASIC TRENDS AFFECTING EDUCATION

Social Considerations

As a result of the evolution of today's complex society, many social institutions have either adapted to changed conditions or the influence they exerted in the past has considerably diminished. In some instances, usually in the commercial sector, the adaptation has been successful and the function has continued at an undiminished rate. Two basic institutions, however, the church and the family, appear to be among those institutions whose influence is declining. Religion, in many different forms, appears to be a stronger force than it was a decade or two ago but the manifestations of religious feelings are more through individual and small groups and not through the traditional organized forms. The family remains one of the strong threads in the social fabric but even there evidence of new patterns of group relationships can be found. While at the time Australian families are larger than those in other Western nations,* the necessity to restrict world population growth appears inevitable. When these restrictions become effective, the size of family kinships will substantially decrease. To replace family patterns and to provide for some type of extended kinship, other forms of human attachments will become essential.

The shift in value patterns of modern society has been cited by many authors and some of these changes deserve at least superficial examination. The work ethic in modern society appears to be greatly diminished. With a lower value placed on work, the use of leisure time will become a more prominent aspect of daily life. Many economists have been predicting the arrival of the era of the leisure society and many of us await with keen anticipation the coming of prolonged periods of indolent bliss. The word "leisure" carries the wrong connotation for many people; a better term is "discretionary time" which indicates the amount of time available for individual distribution. Caldwell (1973) states that the three leisure functions are: relaxation, self-development, and entertainment. While the reason why people participate in leisure activities have been categorized as catharsis, compensation, surplus energy release, relaxation and task generalization, there is insufficient knowledge about leisure motivation and patterns for individuals to decide what is the proper balance among the three functions.

Along with diminished emphasis on the work ethic, values placed on law, order and patriotism are decreasing in strength. Recent wars, particularly the one in south-east Asia, have generated many questions about the use of authority and law to force a country's citizens into patterns of behaviour which to many thoughtful citizens is clearly barbaric. Concomitantly, feelings of nationalism and the sense of national identity have become stronger. Not nationalism in the old sense of, "My Country, right or wrong," but an intense pride in Australia coupled with a desire to change or modify Australian society. Some of the strategies adopted by young people to bring about improvement may not win our sympathy nor meet with our approval, but the basic motivation of the majority is easily understandable.

* **Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia**, Government Printer, Canberra, 1972, p. 147, states the following rates of natural increase: Australia—11.5; Canada—10.2; U.S.A.—8.8; France—6.1; United Kingdom—4.4; Western Germany—1.7.

Recent developments have amply demonstrated that tension and conflict among major racial, ethnic and other interest groups in society is on the increase. The demands of the aboriginals, for example, for a share in the results of an advancing industrial society are becoming more vocal and insistent. The propensity of recent immigrants to work long hours and ignore union regulations creates tension at the workface. In addition the material affluence of some of the newcomers is regarded jealously by some native Australians. Rural citizens feel government, businessmen and entrepreneurs are parasites living off their labour while many urban dwellers associate rising food prices with the demands of well-to-do farmers. Recently, intergenerational conflict has become more noticeable (Beswick, 1972). While much of the open confrontation, this far, has been confined to tertiary institutions, great potential exists for conflict in many secondary schools, particularly in those with an academic orientation and an authoritarian administration (Beswick, 1972).

The vast array of societal problems together with superior diagnostic and analytical knowledge has made mental illnesses more visible. For a large proportion of those who feel the effects of mental depression and other forms of mental stress, the solution is dependency on alcohol and drugs. For the multitude, alcohol is the panacea to overcome the tensions associated with a fast-paced life. For a small percentage, the use of mood-changing and mood-inducing drugs offers release from the problems of everyday living. While there has recently been increased reaction against drug usage on the part of some citizens, it is inconceivable that this societal trend can be deflected let alone reversed. Use and abuse of drugs and alcohol is and will continue to be a problem pressing for solution.

The growing awareness of the importance of positive human relationships in everyday life is becoming readily apparent. Part of the change is a reaction against the growing complexity of living and the growth of pervasive institutions. Part of the change in attitude is expressed as a concern for individuality and individual rights. Many people, particularly young people are searching for different ways of establishing authentic relationships. Combined with the search for better means of interpersonal communication and understanding is the tendency for students to identify with such idealistic values as humanitarianism, aesthetics and artistic expression rather than with materialistic goals.*

Economic Considerations

An accelerating trend for Australia since World War II has been the move to a more "open" economy with all the subtle implications the term carries, i.e. more trade with other nations and intensified efforts to increase trade, continued influx of in-migrants with different traditions and life-styles, increased movement of people both within Australia and abroad so that much of the old feeling of isolation is disappearing, continued importation of capital to found new industries or to expand

* The evidence tends to be ambivalent and contradictory showing the basic uncertainties present in most young people. Preliminary analysis of data for the Regional Colleges Project conducted by the Education Research Unit, Australian National University, clearly illustrates the lack of consensus among young people.

existing facilities, and while not a haven, at least a home for multinational corporations.* This openness while it is assisting Australians in developing an appreciation of other peoples, will at the same time lead to increased business as groups in society strive for greater control over investments and their returns.

In all likelihood, production of goods and services will expand although perhaps at a lower rate than has occurred in the past five years. Inflation, too, will probably mark the remainder of this century. If the inflationary trend continues to accelerate, a number of effects will be experienced in education. One will be that expectations of increasing affluence will do much to determine the attitudes of young people towards education and the world of work. Another relates to the relative increasing cost of education. Because of its labour intensive nature, an increase in financial resources will not necessarily mean a corresponding increase in quantity and quality of output. Educators need to be aware of this problem and continually attempt to derive the maximum value from each dollar spent. A third will be that the cost-price squeeze will certainly affect teachers' wage demands and continued confrontation between teachers and the Public Service Board can be anticipated.

On a broader front, speculation, first in minerals and then in land, has been the source of many wild rumours, stories of vast fortunes, quickly and easily acquired, which cannot help but affect the attitudes of impressionable young people. They will expect, first, to benefit from get-rich-quick schemes, and, second, having failed in the first, demand an equitable taxation and distribution system so that one person may not benefit at the expense of another.

Further, speculation along with misrepresentative advertising and a lack of concern for either the product or the consumer point out to young people the anomalies of an advanced industrial society. Discrepancies between what is held up to them as ideal and what they see as real are so great that they not only question the basic values but accept them as false and insincere.

More and more citizens will become concerned about the conservation of natural resources and the maintenance of an ecological balance. At the same time that this trend is occurring, there will be greater tension among trading nations and blocks of nations for control of scarce resources. Young people, particularly, are becoming much concerned about the usages of non-renewable resources. As the demand for these resources continue, entrepreneurs and preservationists will reach a confrontation stage. Each group, in the build-up to confrontation, will attempt to influence the school's curriculum and the attitudes of students. This is but one example of how competing groups will attempt to use education to further their objectives. Pressure may not be placed directly on the educational authorities but an indirect approach through the use of all aspects of media will be more difficult to discern.

While this particular condition is more demographic than economic, the financial implications could have an escalating effect on government spending. An increasing proportion of the population will live in urban environments and a greater percentage

* This trend towards openness in both the economic and political aspects of Australian life has been particularly noticeable under the Whitlam Government.

of the people will be in the older age brackets. Crowded urban living is a condition now only being vaguely measured in terms of human cost. The need to provide more recreational facilities has long been recognised by educators and social workers. As cities continue to expand, governing councils and concerned citizens will be forced, sometimes at great cost, to rebuild and restructure cities for people and not always for governments, planners and developers. The increasing age of the population will also bring a greater demand for recreational facilities for the above-sixty age group and place greater emphasis on continuing education.

Political Considerations

Allied to the move to an 'open' economy will be changes in the traditional political alignments. While Britain and the Commonwealth will remain important to Australia, their influence will decline. Similarly, the regional protectionism of the South Pacific will depend less on the United States. Australia will become a much less derivative nation and gradually much more tolerant of a wide variety of social attitudes and behaviours. Only in the last year or two has the realisation of the tremendous changes which have been taking place during the past decade begun to reach the level of national awareness.

The technological means of receiving, storing and using information will become increasingly sophisticated. Not only will all manner of data processing become more complex, it will become more pervasive. Even now, the 'computer' touches almost every aspect of our daily life. With unlimited and unknown surveillance of the citizen's affairs possible, the moral and practical questions about the use of this technique will be increasingly controversial. As important to the educator as the moral problem will be the increasedly flexible approach to learning strategies so that the school could conceivably become the centre for teaching social rather than cognitive skills.

A third political consideration for the Australian people is the problem of state versus federal control. Since the assumption of taxing powers during World War II by the Commonwealth government, the tendency for centralization has become more and more pronounced. The establishment of the School's Commission and the funding of tertiary education are two recent examples of the expansion of federal power. Australians, if letters to the editors are any reflection of opinion, have very mixed feelings about the increase in federal power. To some extent the feelings reflect political attitudes and affiliations. Despite political biases, however, the setting of educational goals and the establishment of realistic priorities will depend largely upon the extent of the co-operation between state and federal politicians. Presumably, if these representatives can arrive at mutually acceptable solutions, the bureaucrats can be relied upon to provide the structural organization to achieve the desired ends. If neither the politicians nor the bureaucrats can work together, the development of a viable educational structure to fit the needs of a learning society may not be possible. The vast resources necessary for educational systems can only be assigned judiciously if state and commonwealth reach and maintain agreement about common purposes and procedures.

As population increases, both nationally and internationally, government regulations will increasingly affect all phases of life. To some extent the frontier life of untrammelled individualism still exists but the complete freedom of most citizens has been severely curtailed. As urban centres increase in size and complexity the loss of community identity affects all of us, the young most of all. Urban growth is taking place at a time when there are moves towards participatory democracy. Community-minded citizens along with some enlightened civic leaders are attempting to overcome the alienation by searching for new structures and linkages so governmental and administrative organizations will be closer to the average and more responsive to human needs.

These societal trends, at times complementary to one another, at other times antithetical, have in the past made, and in the future will continue to make a decided impact on education. The pressure of these societal patterns rather than diminishing will tend to increase so that education will undergo fundamental changes in the next decade or two.

II. EDUCATIONAL MANIFESTATIONS OF SOCIETAL PRESSURES

These pressures are being expressed in terms of demands on educational institutions: for more sensitive teaching, higher standards, more flexible organizational and instructional arrangement, specialized programs and changes in the decision-making process. Most of these demands can be subsumed under two which seem paramount today—the demand for open education and the demand for relevance. While these two demands or pressures or problems, call them what you will, cannot for practical purposes be separated, I propose to look at each one as a separate entity.

Demand for Relevance

The catchword in education today is relevance. If something isn't wanted, it's irrelevant; if something is wanted, it's relevant. Whether or not the meaning of relevant is known doesn't matter. The word to fire the imagination and conjure acceptance is relevance.

To attempt to define the term may destroy any mystical qualities it may now possess but let's be clear rather than mysterious. Relevant surely means 'related'. Ideas, concepts, and theories related to a child's intelligence, experience, and interests are relevant for him. Information, in whatever form, beyond the interest and capabilities of a student cannot hold his attention and becomes irrelevant for him.

Critics of education, and you apparently have them in Australia, although they may not be as well known as Goodman, Holt, Reimer and Illich, point out that much of what is taught in school today is irrelevant and meaningless. In addition to the critics, many students and some educators support the view. The result of the lack of relevancy is alienation, lack of motivation, dropout problems, unacceptable behaviour, and in extreme cases, damage to property and persons. While the question fo what is relevant and who decides what is relevant may very well be asked, a prior question is what are the bases for stating that much of teaching and learning is irrelevant.

Effrat (1973) has suggested irrelevancies are the result of three factors. The first is that educational programs are excessively academic or cognitive in content. There is a lack of serious attention to the social and emotional development of young people. Aspects of daily living, of what are now being called 'life skills' have been neglected by the school and other socializing agencies. Courses such as consumer education, contemporary law, personal finance, property management and decision-making skills would better prepare most young people for a more effective and satisfying life than many of the present courses.

A second criticism is that school programs are excessively cognitive in form. Heavy emphasis is placed on use of the printed word and on lecturing. There is very little experiential or activity learning. Contemporary research in educational and cognitive development points to the necessity for more concrete and life-related materials and for more activity-based learning. Young people need to spend more time in 'maturing' environments where they have an opportunity to engage in co-operative tasks with a meaningful chance of success or failure, to produce work useful to others and to gain and use knowledge through action.

The third criticism is that present educational programs misplace the learning emphasis. Most students' time is focussed on learning relatively specific and unnecessary information. Instead, their energies should be focussed on developing basic approaches to learning such as learning how to learn, critical thinking, developing generalized principles, methods of analysis and synthesis, and application of knowledge.

If these are legitimate criticisms, then the question of what is relevant and who is to decide what is relevant become important. If we can agree that ideas and techniques should be related to a student's interests, abilities and experience, then the problem is one of making certain that the school program will be relevant and responsive. The problem, really, is one of institutionalizing relevancy.

Open Education

Open education, like relevance, has many different meanings and these vary from a narrow definition confined solely to physical space to an open-ended view where the whole community is involved in the educative process and where the school boundaries are expanded to include the whole community. Four closely related aspects of open-education—physical, academic, community and political—seem worthy of attention.

1. Physical

To most teachers, particularly primary teachers, the term open education means open area classrooms. Whatever reasons may have been given for their construction, open areas are regarded by many as the structural means of permitting or forcing teachers to change their methods and instructional styles. While there is not space to debate the advantages and disadvantages of open area classrooms, the problems resulting from this physical arrangement should be noted.

Open area teaching space provides opportunity for team teaching, flexible groupings, cross-age groupings, and better utilization of learning resources. The two principal problems which arise are psychological security of the individual and learning management. Certain personality types, both pupils and teachers, have difficulty in adapting to the larger space and increased numbers of people. They feel too exposed and suffer an increasing lack of self-confidence. Principals and teachers who are situated in schools with open areas need to be especially attuned to the needs of individuals to avoid any unnecessary psychological damage. The other problem is one of record keeping. In a team teaching situation, the importance of progress records and charts becomes vital. If individualized learning programs are instituted, teachers face a monumental clerical task. Again, an awareness of the individual is critical because with larger numbers, the possibility of overlooking a child's needs greatly increases.

2. Academic

Open education in an academic sense has two aspects: an open curriculum and a flexible teaching force. The open curriculum can be achieved in part by the removal

of external restraints and in part by the involvement of teachers and students in design and evaluation. A more flexible teaching force becomes possible with greater professionalization. Roles and tasks can be more readily differentiated so that employment of adults with a wide range of background skills and training becomes practical. Additionally, integration of volunteers into the total staff of a school is much easier.

At the tertiary level open education is concerned with the problems of course selection and credit transfers. With few exceptions academic programs are designed to give students a depth of knowledge in a particular area thus severely limiting course choice. Students are becoming more insistent that individual interests and knowledge of self rather than professional or other requirements should partially dictate course selection. The problem of transferability of credits is twofold: (a) from one program to another within the institution and (b) from one institution to another. The first type of transfer may penalize the occasional student but disruption is usually minimal. The second type may not yet be a particularly thorny problem in Australia. However, as presently developing tertiary institutions solidify policy and harden procedures, students may not have the ease of movement which they appear to desire.

3. Community

Many people think of open education as the release of educational facilities to neighbourhood groups. In addition to this viewpoint, there are two other aspects to be considered: the wider use of community resources and greater interaction between the school and community. For some time, various segments of the community have suggested that costly school buildings could be better utilized by making them available to community groups. As the demand for recreational facilities intensifies and as the competition for scarce resources increases, more and more proposals will be made to utilize school buildings in off-hours and during holiday periods.

The old notion of putting children in school to learn and that learning takes place only in school is one which is slow to change. Yet the community offers a rich environment for experiential learning. In many countries work-related programs have proven highly successful. Many individuals in the community, too, have abilities and interests which can help to provide a more interesting and varied educational program.

Frequently parents only visit the school if their presence is requested or if they are extremely dissatisfied with a teacher. To help teachers and parents better understand children and one another, parents must be made to feel welcome at the school. Not only must the bridge extend between the home and the school but between the school and other segments of the community as well. Only if there is open communication between the school and its community will there develop a relationship which adds additional dimensions to education.

Universities have traditionally existed apart from the community. Conversely, technical colleges and institutes have maintained close ties with commercial and

industrial interests. Each type has attempted to serve the community by offering a mix of non-credit extension courses in addition to the regular programs. Entrance to diploma and degree courses have been closed except to those individuals holding the necessary entrance qualifications. Another restriction frequently applied is the requirement of full-time attendance. Tertiary institutions, except under certain conditions, have not been prepared to recognize the value of experience or concede that for some people intellectual self-development is possible. The admitting of mature students by some institutions is a recently adopted policy but the problems of part-time attendance and greater accessibility by a wider audience must be resolved if education is to become a life-long process.

4. Political

Undoubtedly the most controversial aspect of open education is the political one. If there is to be balance among various groups, the matter of control is always a delicate question. Steps to make decisions about how and to what extent the community has a voice in the governance of schools have already been taken in parts of Australia. Surely it is not too far from the realm of possibility to foresee some lay involvement in policy development, in choice of teachers and administrators, in consultation about programs and in general the exercise of control over the non-professional affairs of the school.

More open governance of universities and colleges cannot surely be avoided. The recent move to turn teacher colleges into colleges of advanced education removes them from the sphere of complete departmental control. Through their newly constituted councils, policy-making will become less closed and it will be influenced by a wider sector of the community. While governments have, in the past, remained relatively apart from control of the universities, it seems unlikely that the same degree of autonomy will exist in the future. As education becomes more and more one of the government's instruments to mould the future shape of society, governing bodies of universities will be forced to surrender some of their authority to the public.

In addition to wider public participation in the policy-making process, students will continue to force the issue of the extension of their right to access to decision-making procedures which affect their welfare. While student demands may be the result initially of political moves by radicals, emerging consensus seems to be that students should have a voice in designing the curriculum and evaluating the quality of the teaching. The recent altercation at the University of New England is an example of the seriousness and pervasiveness of this problem which can give rise to highly charged emotional and at times physical confrontation.

Problems similar to the ones I have been describing have made their appearance in somewhat different forms in many countries. Certainly, they are evident in Canada. Within the past two years three of the Canadian provinces have attempted to grapple with the issues by commissioning studies investigating the state of education, together with recommendations for future action. I propose now to describe the major thrust of these reports with the hope that their insights may prove useful to Australians.

III. PROPOSED CANADIAN SOLUTIONS TO CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS.

The first of these three reports, published in Alberta, was based on an extensive three-year study of every phase of education in Alberta. The format attempts to take advantage of the theories of Marshall McLuhan but in so doing, the verbal sections are choppy, continuity is lacking and reading is difficult. The Ontario Report was also published in 1972 following extensive research and preparation. It is concerned solely with post-secondary education although not in a narrow academic sense, but covering the entire cultural range of advancement opportunities. The aim of the Wright Report was to discover the "inner logic" of the processes which determine or help to determine the characteristics of post-secondary education. The format is typical of commission reporting style, the writing is concise and illuminating and the arguments deftly and logically put. The Manitoba or Oliver Report, in contrast to the other two, was quickly organised and the final report was submitted to the minister in a few months over a year following the initial meeting of the task force. The format makes the Report easy to read and comprehend. In addition, the Report contains a number of scenarios which exemplify the recommendations in an attempt to add the human touch.

An interesting sidelight was the procedure adopted by the three committees to provide feedback to the community. In addition to soliciting and receiving briefs, each commission or task force issued position papers as preliminary reports so that the public had the opportunity to react to the basic ideas prior to the publication of the final report. The criticisms and reactions were encompassed in the final documents and submitted to the respective ministers. In the case of the Alberta or Worth Report, the final copy was sold over the counter in super-markets and public reaction was invited.

Each of these reports differs in many respects but there are major themes developed in each of the three. Before looking at the major emphases, however, what the reports have analyzed as the causes of post-secondary problems can be briefly noted.

Causes of Post-Secondary Problems

One of the major causes of tensions in post-secondary education was the large and rapid enrolment increase in the number of students in a period when society was experiencing rapid changes. The reasons for change were increased economic growth, greater social and occupational mobility, competition with the United States and a desire to utilize knowledge to promote industrial growth. The decade of the sixties which produced excessive and unrealistic expectations has been followed by a period of disenchantment with education at all levels. Excessive behaviour by radical students and highly publicized unemployment of university graduates have caused a disinclination on the part of the public to afford education the same proportion of support it enjoyed in the 1950s and 1960s. Coupled with the long term trends described in the first section of this paper, reduced student enrolments and student complaints about courses, teaching and administration have produced almost intoler-

able tension. The question which all Canadians, not only those who reside in the provinces where education has been under directed public scrutiny, is what changes are needed to restore or maintain public confidence and support for the educational system.

A Human Centred Society

All three reports leave no doubt but emphasis must be on the individual as a living organism and not as a figure in statistical reports and tables. The Worth or Alberta Report indicates, á la Charles Reisch's Consciousness I, II and III in *The Greening of America*, that there are three learning modes: Mode I—institutional; Mode II—co-operative or membership; and Mode III—autonomous; and the Report leaves no doubt but that the Commissioners believe Mode III is the desirable learning stance. The Wright Report states that in education the individual must be the central consideration. In post-secondary institutions there is a danger of depersonalization whereas for education to be truly effective, it must be a humanizing process which can only be achieved through openness, flexibility, diversity and continuing innovations. From the whole spectrum of educational services available, the individual must decide on his own educational experience. Only by this process can people learn to live productively in a highly complex, industrial society. The Oliver Report, too, stresses the need for focussing on the individual as the centre of society and expresses concern for those who are inadequately served by education such as the poor, women, the disadvantaged and the rural people.

Accessibility

One of the principal means of making education more open is to make it more accessible to the whole range of citizens in society. Several new approaches to this problem were devised by the committee members and described in the reports. Both the Alberta and Manitoba Reports stress the need for Regional Learning Centres. These Centres would be linked to existing social service networks and in addition to utilizing institutional facilities and services, there would be an attempt to tap resources within the immediate vicinity. The concept is to provide a wide variety of special services to accommodate a wide range of learning needs. To achieve this objective, the Regional Learning Centres must serve as a central supply depot of both human and material resources. In place of regional centres, the Ontario Report recommends the establishment of small, regional, campus-based colleges with enrolments of one to two thousand students. Because members of the Ontario Commission believe that printed material remains the main learning media, the Report recommends that provision should be made for special grants to libraries in remote areas. Furthermore, all libraries, university libraries included, should be accessible to all citizens in the province.

The Oliver Task Force rejected the concept of an open university because it is a "university" rather than a post-secondary institution, the cost is too high for the returns offered, services would be centralized in Winnipeg, and the most telling argument is that research conducted in the United Kingdom has shown that the open

university serves the same group which could be served by existing institutions. The Alberta and Ontario Commissions recommended the establishment of the Alberta Academy and the University of Ontario. Each of these institutions would have similar functions. The primary purpose is to act as a staging agency between the citizens of the province and the post-secondary institutions. A variety of media would be employed to offer personalized learning programmes so the necessary upgrading could be undertaken. The Alberta Academy would initially offer a diploma year which would entitle successful candidates entrance into any post-secondary institution in the province. Eventually a degree programme could be instituted but only when the population reached the point where enrolments would make the programme feasible. The University of Ontario, if established as recommended, would have much wider powers. Testing and evaluating applicants for post-secondary institutions would be part of the University's duties. The University would also govern admission into restricted programmes such as Dentistry and Medicine: lottery, not influence, would be the criterion once the basic admission standards had been achieved. Professional certificates would have a ten year limitation period unless the holder satisfied the University that he had upgraded his qualifications. Honorary degrees would be granted to anyone in the province who had made a significant contribution to the increase of knowledge.

The concept of the University of Ontario is that of an "open" university. Part-time students, through the University, would have access to all programmes of the post-secondary institutions. Students would be able to choose courses from different programmes, i.e. engineering and arts or agriculture and social work, as well as from different institutions. This variety of choice would provide flexible curricula without greatly increasing cost.

Governance

In some of the Canadian provinces, some post-secondary institutions are directly under the control of departments of education. Universities, while they receive the greatest proportion of their revenues from the provincial governments, usually receive monies from a buffer organization such as a universities grants commission. All reports recommended a much more open approach to governance in education and much greater public participation in policy-making. Despite this recommendation, committee members believe that a buffer between government and tertiary institutions is necessary. The Oliver Report, for example, recommended that a Commission on Post-Secondary Education be established with a universities branch and a colleges branch to provide some public control over colleges and universities but at the same time allow them a degree of autonomy.

Authority and control in most universities is exercised through a board and a council. The board is composed of lay members, usually appointed by cabinet or elected by an alumni association. The council or senate consists of elected and appointed university staff members. A council would roughly correspond to an Australian university's professorial board. The reports recommended retention of this bicameral system of university governance. Boards should have a majority of lay members, while the university council should be representative of all campus groups (teaching

staff, students, and support staff) but it should be small enough to work effectively. Co-operation among these groups and between them and the buffer agency is essential for the well-being of all. Because the decision-making process should involve those whom the decisions affect, most action will be at the local level and provincial action should be limited. All meetings and records of meetings should be open to the public and right of petition must exist in all institutions.

These two principles should also apply to the public school. The Worth Report, because regionalization and centralization have created barriers between the school and the community, recommends that a council should be initiated for each school with authority over such matters as budget priorities, school regulations and auditing of school funds. Only by establishing this link and adhering to the two principles enunciated in this section can schools become responsive to and relevant for the community.

Continuing Education

All three committees urge that life-long education be accepted, encouraged and supported. The Wright Report challenges the stress placed on universal sequential attendance and doubts that tertiary education is more valuable for one age group than for another. If the reasons for sequential education are almost wholly social, then socially viable alternatives must be provided. The first of these alternatives is that accessibility should be almost universal. The second is that unions and employers, government, business and professional organizations must negotiate for release study periods. Work/study programs should form a much larger segment of the secondary and post-secondary programs, while tertiary institutions must provide shorter, more intensive programs. Some of the techniques suggested for more effective continuing education are: mobile campuses, educational television, correspondence courses, contractual learning programs, professional dial-access systems, and the use of existing study centres. The essential problem is to break down the barriers between education and life.

IV. CONCLUSION

If the need in education is to make the system more open and relevant, the essential question to ask is to what extent these recommended techniques and concepts will provide the solution. How far will the making of courses and programs either on a part-time or regular basis available to adults go to meet the accusations that have been made about education? Is open administration and greater participation in governance part of the answer? To what extent can these reforms, if they can be called reforms, be adopted and affect life at the learning face in the classroom and in the laboratory?

The Wright Report states the belief that education is the mirror of society reflecting both the blemishes and the beautiful. If we destroy education, we destroy the instrument which transmits our values. If we destroy education, we destroy the system which creates and transmits knowledge. This dual purpose creates the dynamic which prepares people for the real world and which defies a continuance of the status quo. Our problem is to continue to search for the unique balance which provides our society with a dynamic, responsive educational system.

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EDUCATION AS AN ACTIVE AGENT IN CHANGING SOCIETY

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"If administators and politicians are going to play God with nther people's lives . . . they ought at least to get clear what divine intention is to be."

(D.P. Moynihan, **Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding,** Free Press : New York, 1968, p. 168)

Paper presented at the State Conference,

The Australian College of Education
Western Australia Chapter

Bunbury, Western Australia

March 23rd, 1974

A. Planning Social Change Through Education

Mediaeval monarchs may have had the power to change their whole kingdoms, but they rarely seem to have pursued consistent long term policies of social improvement. Indeed, such policies may only be born of an economic surplus and, hence, may have grown more possible with the birth of capitalism. Certainly theorising about the aims and means of social change became common in Europe after the late-eighteenth century. A crucial figure was Jeremy Bentham, whose method of social planning was somewhat pithily summed up in the words "investigate, legislate, administer". This prescription was behind the nineteenth century plethora of royal commissions in Britain and Australia—and in those days royal commissions were not a means of shelving problems, but usually led to action.

The natural successors of Bentham, though with an evolutionary socialist rather than laissez-faire aim, were the Webbs, whose offspring, the Fabians, still model their political method upon the Benthamite prescription. These two traditions of reform aimed not to change total societies tomorrow, but to move more slowly by giving attention to one sector of society after another. The conditions of labour in factories, prisons, and education, all underwent change in Britain and to some extent in Australia before 1900 in this way. The important point to notice is that at every stage this process was under the full gaze of the public through parliament. The investigation and the consequent legislation were debated, and the relevant minister's administration was subsequently openly evaluated.

During this century two administrative innovations have affected the means of achieving sectoral social change, particularly in education. The first occurred symbolically at the turn of the century, when in Britain by the 1899 Education Act a system of Consultative Committees was set up—to be renamed Central Advisory Councils in 1944. This system was to generate such famous reports as the Hadow, Spens, Crowther, Newsom and Plowden Reports. Here a statutory body of experts, working in a part-time capacity with the support of a small secretariat, reports to the responsible minister on sectoral issues. Such a body can be critical of the status quo and recommend changes, although the minister need not act on the suggestions. The point to note is that the body is advisory, not executive. However, since the 1950s, the urgency of the social pathologies of capitalist society, particularly in the U.S.A., have prompted the creation of expert bodies with considerable independence who themselves undertake all three processes of the Benthamite prescription for sectoral social change. Examples in the U.S.A. are the Poverty Program and in the educational field, Headstart.

The overall results of Headstart and similar large-scale programmes have, however, been disappointing in comparison with smaller experimental projects. Partly this is due to the problems implicit in large-scale operations and partly to the difficulty of recruiting an even quality of keen staff throughout such massive programmes. But, in addition, there are important differences from the Benthamite prescriptions. Such programmes rarely rest on specific research, but usually on past academic research that may not be quite relevant and that is often of poor quality and even has very debatable implications—one may here cite the Jensen controversy. Second, many

of these programmes are not closely planned, so that development depends upon local issues or even personal whims. Third, since aims are vague, comparative evaluation is almost impossible; the history of the evaluation of Headstart is a warning to all of this difficulty. [1] Note, here, a point to be taken up later, namely, that Action Research such as that involved in the British Educational Priority Areas (E.P.A's) is a very different method from the type of programme to which reference has been made here.

The aims of any sectoral social change are not only important because they are crucial for evaluation. They also indicate the beliefs of the planners about where they see society to be today and where they want it to be tomorrow. Underlying the aims which anyone holds for education, or any other sector of society, are a set of conscious or unconscious assumptions of an ideological nature. Underlying these assumptions will be a model of man, that is, a view about such issues as whether man makes his world or is made by it, whether man's capabilities are more influenced by genetic or environmental circumstances, and, perhaps most important of all, about whether man is innately good or bad. This model of man will strongly influence the model of society that is held, that is, the vision of the good society towards which planning is aimed. Both these models will be worked out in such social organisations as educational systems and in schools. In very oversimplified terms a planner who believes in original sin will probably aim for a more traditional educational system than one who believes that man is innately good.

During the period from 1945 to 1965, broadly the period of attempted post-war reconstruction, planners put their model of society prior to their model of man. This was the age when economists spoke of "human capital" and educational planners sought to increase the supply of highly trained or skilled labour. During this same period sociologists, basing themselves on a long English academic tradition, developed the political arithmetic of social class chances. Largely as a result planners suggested organising schools so that educational opportunities would be equalized. During the mid-1960s, a major ideological shift occurred, the cause and nature of which is still under debate. This was characterised by a movement to give priority to models of men over models of society. Men must no longer be fitted to society, rather society must change to meet the personal needs of individuals. The best index of this ideological tendency which may be called radical individualism is, perhaps, the student movements of the last decade. These worldwide changes have been felt in Australia as elsewhere, but what is remarkable is that, when in 1973 the Labor Party set out to change what was seen to be the massive neglect of education by the Liberals during their twenty years of power, their initiative was in character fundamentally of the 1950s and 1960s, and not of the more recent era of radical individualism. This can be seen if we examine *Schools in Australia*, the Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, published in May

1. For an account see M.S. Smith and J.S. Bissell, "Report Analysis: The Impact of Head Start", *Harvard Educational Review*, 40 (1), February 1970, pp. 51–104.

1973, [2] more usually known as the Karmel Report. This document forms the basis of the present government's educational policy as it affects schools, more particularly for the next two years. After a detailed examination of this Report as a case study of planning educational change, the intention is to return to the general problem of the means of achieving sectoral social change, more especially in education.

B. The Karmel Report and Educational Change

(i) **Model of Society.** The characteristically Australian demand for "fair go's" has been particularly influential in past educational planning. Fairness has been "confined to public schooling, and has been interpreted there as an equal and in the main, uniform provision, throughout (a) State" (3.30). [3] Educational concepts are, however, redefined by successive generations and this definition which was common throughout the world, was based on the aim of giving an equal share of the available resources to all. After 1945, equality was interpreted in a meritocratic manner so that planners aimed to give equal opportunities to those of equal capabilities. This definition was less powerful in Australia than in Britain, but in Victoria schools like Melbourne and University High indicate an embryonic meritocratic system. More recently equality in education has come to be defined in terms of what would once have been seen as inequality. "More equal outcomes from schooling require unequal treatment of children" (3.19). The index of equality here is output, not input, and, hence, to use the concept associated with the Plowden Report "positive discrimination" becomes the policy for the planners. [4]

Another facet of equality relates to the plurality of recognised social groupings within Australian society. Ethnic groups, both white and black, and different religious denominations are seen to have equal rights to exist. Rather oddly one social category for which many in the last five years have claimed equality, namely women, receive less mention in this connection in the Report and are not included at all in the definition of disadvantage in the Schools Commission Act that directly resulted from the Report. [5] This view of society as pluralist along specific dimensions extends to the continued toleration of non-government schools, which are largely religious in origin. "Any variation from this position would, in the Committee's view, require a policy decision on the part of the Australian Government" (7.14).

2. *Op. cit.*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1973.
3. Throughout the rest of this paper the convention will be followed of citing *Schools in Australia* by referring to the chapter and paragraph number in the original document.
4. See J. Evetts, "Equality of Educational Opportunity: The Recent History of a Concept", *British Journal of Sociology*, 21 (4), December, 1970, pp. 425–430.
5. Schools Commission Act, No. 213 of 1973, 3 (1).

The vision of society assumed by the Report see schools as "less alienated from their communities than is now generally the case in disadvantaged areas " (9.9). Community involvement and devolution of decisions to schools are seen as crucial aims to plan towards. Contemporary Australian society is seen as over-segmented. There is a connection here with the assumption of equality in a plural society. Many "communities", whatever they may be, are to be given equality and power over their schools. [6] Clearly there is a difficult tension here since the cure for excessive segmentation is the encouragement of an identification with existing segments. The question of overall cultural rather than sub-cultural unity, may have been begged.

The model of society which the Report assumes to be worthwhile for Australia in the 1980s would seem to be one marked by equality, by the toleration of a wide variety of social groupings, including different religious groups, and by a firm rootedness in local communities.

(ii) **Model of the Individual.** "A wide range of differences exist among individual children" (10.1). "The final outcome" of "developed ability . . . is the result of continuous and complex interaction between genetic and environmental contributions" (3.18). Because of this view attention must be given to achieving equal outcomes by planning for such categories as slow learners and bright children. Above all the assumption is that, since many of the differences in children on entering school can be attributed to the unequal distribution of incomes in society, "there are good reasons for attempting to compensate to some extent through schooling for unequal out-of-school situations in order to ensure the child's overall condition of upbringing is as free of restrictions due to the circumstances of his family as public action through the schools can make it" (2.7). However, the psychological model of man assumed governs "the range of strategies of attack offered". A genetic view of ability constrains the limits of compensation in a way that neither an environmentalist view nor an appeal to the hidden curriculum of the school does. The Report's support for "complex interaction" has it all ways, but their use of the difficult word "compensate" despite a relatively lengthy discussion (9.10–9.12) demands some examination before passing on to an analysis of their administrative model for change.

Compensatory education has been questioned on a number of grounds. Recently Jencks has comprehensively reviewed much of the relevant literature and confidently asserted that since the school can do little to offset the inequality born in the unequal structure of capitalist society, attention should be switched from attempting to reform the school to the more radical alternative of changing the structure of incomes. On this view our only aim in schools should be to make them a joyful

6. See P.W. Musgrave, "The Relationship between School and Community: A Reconsideration", *Community Development Journal*, 8 (3), October 1973, pp. 167–178.

experience for their pupils. [7] However, even if Jencks' use of statistics is beyond question, and that is not an easily answered matter, he still allows some, to me quite large, effects to the schools.

Recent sociological discussion of this concept has focussed on the hidden values implicit in the whole idea of compensatory education. Deficits are to be made up, but against which criteria are they to be measured? Usually the aim is to match standards associated with successful pupils who are seen to be middle, rather than working class and members of the Australian, rather than of the migrant or the black cultures.

Language has come to be seen as central to any discussion of compensatory education. The work of Bernstein has led many people to see compensation largely in terms of a shift for disadvantaged children from a restricted to an elaborated linguistic code. One fine piece of research by the Gahagans in association with Bernstein in London has focussed on a daily language programme in the primary school aimed to move working class and black children to speaking and understanding a more elaborated code. [8] This relatively successful programme raises important issues concerning the values assumed in such intra-cultural comparisons. Recently Labov has published a paper entitled "The Logic of Nonstandard English", in which he demonstrates that black English in the USA can be seen as a language in its own right. [9] Yet the ability to operate only in such a language in contemporary American society or the equivalent position in Australian society, is a disadvantage even though it is possible to write, as two American anthropologists have done, "A disadvantage created by a difference is not the same thing as a deficit." [10] Such disadvantages are a part of contemporary social reality so that in the framework of the Karmel Report counter-vailing action must be taken.

In a more absolute sense Bernstein has written, "The introduction of the child to the universalistic meanings of public forms of thought is not compensatory education, *it is education*." [11] Thus, if a code other than elaborated does not allow entry to

7. C. Jencks *et al.*, *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America*, Basic Books, New York, 1972.
8. D.M. & G.A. Gahagan, *Talk Reform*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1970.
9. See W. Labov, *op. cit.*, *Georgetown Monographs on Language and Lingustics*, 22, 1969, 1–31.
10. S.S. & J.C. Baratz, "Early Childhood Intervention in the Social Science Base of Institutional Racism", *Harvard Education Review*, 40 (1), February, 1970, p. 36.
11. B. Bernstein, "A Critique of the Concept of 'Compensatory Education'", in (eds) D. Rubenstein and C. Stoneman, *Education for Democracy*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970, p. 120 (italics in original).

full meaning, then the child should be taught elaborated code. In such instances, even if a claim is made that one is merely making an alternative available, a value judgement is operating that puts one mode of thought above another, and, since the correlation between speaking restricted code and being a member of the working class, though not perfect, is high, the mental slip to assuming the middle class culture superior to the culture of the working class is easy, though unfortunate. In addition there is evidence to support the view that lower class children learn more effectively under conditions of extrinsic motivation whilst middle class children respond to intrinsic motivation.[12] Thus, the position is reached that, since a model of man is assumed that gives great weight to social circumstances in the genesis of individual differences, "compensatory education" is a valid concept and may have to be undertaken differently for different social groups in any society.

(iii) **The Administrative Model for Change.** The Report is firmly in the tradition of the post-war era in that a Schools Commission is to be established, backed by a secretariat (13.11) and consisting of full and part-time experts, whose members "should be able to conduct its proceedings on the merits of the business before it, with its members not bound to any particular point of view on specific questions" (13.6). Such a body "cannot change society directly, but . . . its influence must come through recommendations for financial assistance to schools and school systems, and thus through the resources made available to schools" (5.2). Indeed, the minister should have power to act on "the recommendations of the Commission if the Commission thinks re-allocation is desirable in the light of applications made by non-government schools" (7.20). The experts can be seen to have wide powers over the manner in which resources for change are channelled to the schools in both the government and non-government systems.

At this point comparison can be made with experience in the USA. One of the key problems in implementing programmes there has been a tendency to rely overmuch on rationality and to ignore the political dimension.[13] Yet in Australia the central Schools Commission is seen as channeling resources to states through Regional Boards (13.8) in such a way that "the direction of developments should be determined by those involved in and having a close knowledge of particular schools and particular communities". The direction of change is, then, largely at the mercy of local politics. The Report rightly comments that "the traditional process of change in Australian education . . . (has) been characterised by the imposition of new policies from above on schools across-the-board" (12.2), so that projects have been "ineffectual . . . (in part) because the people most affected have been made to feel that they are merely reacting to a particular policy or procedures instead of being actively engaged in formulating it" (12.4). Yet the more that faith is pinned on the local community, the more necessary will it be for the experts to leave their ivory

12. Ibid

13. P. Marris and M. Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1967.

towers and descend into the political arena, though the politics played, at least in theory, if rarely in practice, need not be along the dimensions of party.

(iv) **Directions of Change.** The models of society and of man implicit in the Report lead logically to recommendations relating especially to equality, plural groups and local involvement. Yet the Report, whilst speaking of "the planning of the strategic development of education on a national scale, as distinct from its centralised administration", can nevertheless claim that "the Commission should concern itself more with providing incentives for the schools to move in one direction or another, than with delineating a particular model of precise development" (13.2). This picture of a Commission serving as the administrative mechanism for change without any policy which provides direction is belied, however, by the actual programmes recommended.

The attempt to make "the overall circumstances of children's education as nearly equal as possible" (14.3) is largely to be supported by four major programmes costing $407 ms. out of the $467 ms. recommended for expenditure during 1974–5 (14.10). These programmes relate to general recurrent grants to schools, general buildings grants, libraries, and grants to disadvantaged schools. One crucial assumption here is that, although diversity is to be encouraged, schools are central to the purpose of education. "Because the Committee believes that schools have distinctive functions for which no other institution in society is specifically responsible, it is considered important that these functions be not only retained but exercised with increasing success" (2.21). Oddly, perhaps, no use is made of an argument provided by Jencks that "if all elementary schools were closed down, so that growing up became an endless summer . . . the cognitive gap between rich and poor and between black and white would thus be far greater than it is now."[14]

Indeed, it is to these groups in our plural society to which the Report directs much of the argument and many of their recommendations. As already noted needs are related to certain disadvantaged groups. The Schools Commission Act, 1973, defines disadvantage in terms of students who are "members of a community which for social, economic, ethnic, geographic, cultural, lingual or any similar reason (have) a lower than average ability to take advantage of educational facilities."[15] Yet, no extended consideration is given to the content of education for each social group. Indeed, the whole Report is strangely silent about the curriculum, which is either discussed briefly in terms of the attitudes developed as a result of "the quality of relationships between and among pupils and teachers" (5.4) or as a matter for teachers' choice, often between "alternatives that curriculum development on a

14. C. Jencks, *op. cit.*, pp. 87–8. This argument might be deduced from much other evidence on "the threshold effect" of education, see e.g., K.P. Langton and M.K. Jennings, "Political socialization and the high school civics curriculum in the U.S.", *American Political Science Review*, 62 ( ), 1968, pp. 852–67.

15. Schools Commission Act, No. 213 of 1973, 3 (1).

national scale would (provide)" (12.13). The notion that Midwinter evolved in the Liverpool E.P.A. is ignored. His object was to teach disadvantaged pupils to live critically in their environment. Such children must exist in poor conditions for the time being, but need not accept their situation.[16] Such a curriculum is dedicated to changing the social structure from the grassroots upwards. It is fundamentally Fabian in aim, and optimistically assumes that man can and will do something to change his environment rather than pessimistically allow it to mould him.

The Karmel Report argued very strongly for involvement by the community in the school. This position was supported for three different reasons, namely as "a means both of extending its educational influence and of reinforcing pupil motivation" and of bringing teachers and parents closer together (2.19). The committee acknowledge "the antipathy towards and apathy about direct community participation in the governance of schooling" (2.19), and that "mutual suspicion . . . between administration and teachers" might inhibit "the devolution of authority" (5.6). Yet is pressed for this new and participatory version of the democratic myth. Research in which I am at present involved in high schools in Melbourne provides evidence to make me doubt whether the general public are willing to participate in this way. By and large decisions about education are seen as belonging to teachers who are defined as the experts. As one parent said, "Why should I tell a teacher what to do? He wouldn't tell me how to be a plumber." Furthermore, if those in a locality are to be involved in running the schools, they must be given real decisions to make. In this connection the Victorian government would appear to be acting wisely in making money available to schools if they will take the responsibility to use it for such purposes as the improvement of local opportunities for leisure.

To make schools more open to parents could well have a similar effect to the extension of the welfare state in the U.K., where the middle class proved more competent to use the available opportunities than did the working class. Participation could well become more common amongst the middle class. Indeed, it might also be true that the middle class use open and innovatory schools more than the working class. At one such Melbourne school a visitor was met by a student who made a great deal of the claim that he was the only really working class pupil in this school!

One other direction of change is suggested in the Report. This is "the concept of lifelong education" (2.24), "of which attendance at primary and secondary schools is one phase" (14.3). However, no detailed suggestions or grants are suggested for the pursuance of this goal.

(v) **Method of Change.** Much has been said en passant concerning the methods by which the suggested changes are to be achieved. Now the problems underlying these methods must be considered. Experts are to define the problems, and both suggest cures and provide resources for change. Yet "the development of grassroots initiatives is basic to the success of the enterprise" (9.39). This situation implies the probability both of tension between community and experts, and the possibility that what the experts want may not in fact be accomplished. And some would say

16. E. Midwinter, *Priority Education*, Harmondsworth; Penguin, 1972.

that, since the community did not want to follow the prescriptions of the experts, they have the right to refuse to change their present educational circumstances towards what the experts want. Indeed, this is what happened in the E.P.A. at Dundee in Scotland where some teachers opposed the suggestion of the experts for changes on the grounds that children would be better off under the present educational regime than under that proposed.[17]

Implicit in local participation in the making of educational decisions is a measure of devolution of power from the centre to "those working in or with the schools – teachers, pupils, parents and the local community" (14.3). The point has already been made that many parents and others do not want to participate in such activities. Many others, again, on our evidence collected in an inner city area in Melbourne, feel that at the moment they do not have the competencies for taking part in what they see as very complicated decisions. Furthermore, those in power in the educational system can, either consciously or by unconsciously preserving their current attitudes which are unfavourable to "opening" schools, hinder this policy. Recently the Victorian Education Department allocated more money to Advisory Councils ostensibly so that they had a larger say in the running of the schools. However, the letter announcing this increased grant also advised Councils to allocate these greater resources between themselves and the principal in the same proportions as they had done previously. Not surprisingly this is what some principals seem to have recommended, thereby preserving the status quo and their own power.

This example illustrates very clearly how crucial are teachers' attitudes when the aim is to change some aspect of the educational system. The Report realises this and advocates the establishment of "Education Centres" which "would serve an important function in stimulating initiatives from the profession . . . and in improving the quality of teacher" (11.18). Rightly the emphasis is put upon in-service training initiated by teachers themselves as being more likely to lead to changes in behaviour than that resulting from courses imposed from above. However, although the committee realised that "the effectiveness of innovation is dependent upon the extent to which the people concerned perceive a problem" (12.4), they gave little attention to publicising possible or successful changes, although they realise that Regional Boards would "serve as a vehicle for promulgating the views of the Commission and for communicating ideas and proposals to the Commission" (13.7). This is particularly so in the case of curricula change.

Furthermore, publicity for successful innovation can act as a reward to the school or teachers concerned. Nowhere does the Report consider the wider system of sanction at work to encourage change and punish those who persist in existing methods. The only sanction really suggested is the admittedly powerful one of money. There is, however, an extensive armoury of rewards and punishment available to those administering schools to use as sanctions on teachers. Promotion may be dependent upon change. Visits to other countries, states or suburbs can follow

17. S.W. Town, "Action Research and Social Policy: Some Recent British Experiences", *Sociological Review*, 21 (4), November 1974, p. 582.

or precede changes. Resources, such as materials, may flow from offers to innovate. However, probably the creation of a true professional esteem will most efficiently facilitate change, since no true teacher would then tolerate less than adequate methods. Under such ideal circumstances more publicity would punish tardy teachers and reward those who pioneered worthwhile new methods.

C. PLANNING SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Despite their disclaimer the writers of the Karmel Report have displayed a view of "the divine intention", though, perhaps, the theology upon which it rests is arguable. Many would agree with their "intention", but what is at issue is the method of achieving it. Jencks may be right to conclude quite unequivocally that "equalising educational opportunity would do very little to make adults more equal"[18], but much evidence shows that education can meet other worthwhile aims, such as making people more literate and numerate than now is the case. Allowing that the Labor Government, purely on political grounds, had early in 1973 to spend and to legitimate the expenditure of much on education, one must ask how the results of this expenditure will be evaluated in 1976 when the next planning period must begin or in 1979 when the Karmel programme should be complete. The excuse formerly available to those working in education that resources are scarce will no longer be possible. Unless major differences in the schools are visible to all, the conclusion of the public, that is, those who pay and whose children are our students, must be that teachers and administrators are unimaginative and/or inefficient. It is for this reason that given "the divine intention" the order of service becomes crucial.

That apparently favoured by the Report appears to rely greatly on experts ("theologians" and "clergy"?) at all levels of administration. The writers of the Report might answer that they have pressed for community action and for devolution to the schools, but communities, wherever they still exist, seem slow to react and the innovatory initiatives of the schools are subject to administrative scrutiny before resources can be made available or are vetoed. What control is there to prevent those in power in the Schools Commission or at state level using their positions to further a political position only supported by a small group of intellectuals. If we are to be in the hands of professional planners, what code of professional ethics is there to prevent what Moynihan has called "malpractice with respect to the community?"[19] Will Satan divert the divine intention?

Under the Benthamite prescription administration was expert but was also open to the political process. Under a system such as that exemplified by the Schools Commission the manner of allocating resources between competing uses and the monitoring of the programme both at central and regional levels can only be seen through a glass darkly. In American cities the political machine took over the anti-poverty programmes. In Australia there would seem to be a good chance that the

18. C. Jencks, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
19. D.P. Moynihan, *op. cit.*, p. 201

planning of social change through our educational system will be taken over by the administrative system. The Australian educational bureaucracies were possibly beginning to wither under the attacks of radical individualism, but they have now found a new purpose. Furthermore, the new task is of the type for which any bureaucracy is ideally adapted, namely the division of material resources between competing applicants. Power returns to the administrator to be exercised on a type of decision in which bureaucracies exhibit great efficiency.

In many ways it is odd that politics have been forgotten in the Report since a pluralist society is envisaged in which community groups have some power. If attitudes can be changed so that such pluralities do take part in educational decisions, then the political problems of our society must be immensely more numerous and in addition probably more difficult in that, as had recently been seen in the case of the Aborigines, the appeal to the spirit of community often involves ethnic antagonism.

It is the over-reliance on material resources and the under-emphasis on politics shown in the Report that indicates one possible future new "divine intention", particularly after the main sins of omission of prior ages have been atoned for. There is a need, particularly in a society like Australia where local government is not highly developed and has little or no part to play in relation to educational decision-making, to initiate a continuous and high standard debate over education at national, state and local level. Then there will be a ferment amongst the public and amongst professionals so that the experts will be forced to render account for their policies and their actions. It would seem that a large number of action research projects throughout Australia and in every type of educational institution might cause just such a ferment. Research never meant much to the doctor in the hospital or to the industrialist in the factory till he saw results that improved his efficiency. Research will never mean much to the practising teacher till he sees it serving his needs in the school. Projects generated by teachers and open to the view, that is to the praise and criticism of other practitioners and public alike could serve this end. Evaluation of what is attempted would, unlike in the present large-scale programmes, be built into the method used. Such evaluation, though rigorous, need not be strictly scientific in nature, but could be pragmatic and even retrospective. Evaluated action is not the same as experimental method.

The issues concerned would presumably be those of local interest so that community involvement would go hand in hand with devolution to the school. Because there are many localities with differing problems, there would inevitably be many diverse small programmes, though in some cases links between similar problems, for example those concerning migrants, would be possible. Such co-operation would be carried out not only by experts or teachers but also by interested and involved local laymen.

This diversity of approach would, furthermore, match the contemporary variety of educational theory. There is as yet no one answer to most educational problems. Each theoretical approach demands a differing way of tackling the problem. The collection of the results of many diverse programmes might enable us to come to a somewhat further knowledge of educational theory.

Earlier an important point concerning most compensatory activity was made, namely that values creep in unsuspectingly. All such action assumes the right to intervene, usually within what is normally the province of the family. We are not slow to criticise the changes wrought in so-called primitive societies by colonial powers or by missionaries. Yet neither are we slow to plan how to compensate for the, to us, poor familial background of the working class or the migrant child. However, since we are a culturally diverse society, the educational needs or demands of each group will be different and this fact supports the plea for diversity made above. It equally indicates that any vestiges of the old definition of equality must go. Schools will grow to be more and more different and this must no longer be seen as meaning that they are more and more unequal.

Above all, the results of this action research must be public. Indeed, in the first policy statement from the new Schools Commission, there should be a publicity programme. Money should be available to finance educational pages in all local and state newspapers, and they should be prepared locally, not syndicated. A national educational monthly might be subsidised. In fact, the single step that might bring more worthwhile change to Australian schools than any other could be if the Schools Commission were to state that no finance was available to any state for any programmes whatever unless all vacant teaching and administrative positions were publicly advertised. Apart from the dynamic effect upon the principle of appointment by seniority, the payment for such advertising would, as with *The Times Education Supplement*, finance a worthwhile national journal, thereby substantially raising the level of educational debate throughout the country.

In a footnote to a recent academic paper, Chazan has, half joking, offered us the formula: Frustration = Aspiration/Achievement.[20] The present programme of the Report, marked by somewhat uncertain divine intention and somewhat weak in theology, will probably raise aspiration more than achievement, thereby increasing frustration, both overall and, perhaps worse, between communities within Australia. The aim must be to seek a firmer theology and, in my view, a vast programme of well-publicised action research might move us in that direction whilst also ensuring that very varied achievement, paralleling very varied educational need, much more nearly matched the differing aspirations of the many plural groupings in Australia. Some frustration would undoubtedly remain, but it would be a more informed feeling and those concerned, having felt the rewards of successful educational experiment, would be more willing and able to proceed further along the Fabian path of educational change. A society operating in this way in one important social sector would be more capable of generalising the method to other spheres – and more likely to say either thank God or, maybe, just thank Gough.

20. L. Chazan, "Participation of the Poor: Section 202(a) (3) Organizations Under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964", *Yale Law Journal*, 75 ( ), March 1966, p. 627.